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# Islamic Fundamentalism in Pakistan

## Its Character and Prospects

Graham E. Fuller

DEFENSE SECRETARIAT

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Prepared for the  
Under Secretary of Defense for Policy

**RAND**

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## PREFACE

This report is one of a series of four analyzing Islamic fundamentalism in the Northern Tier countries—Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. These will be followed by an integrative study seeking to establish common patterns and characteristics in the experience of all those states with fundamentalism.

The purpose of the studies is to examine the phenomenon of Islamic fundamentalism: its origins, historical basis, and its relationship to the political, economic, and social institutions of each country. The studies attempt to answer a series of specific operational and policy questions regarding the likely character of fundamentalist policies in those countries—excluding Iran, which is already a fundamentalist regime—if Islamic radicals were to come to power. The role of Iranian influence is also examined in each of the countries. The studies lastly examine the implications for U.S. policy and the possible options the United States has in shaping its relations with those countries in the future.

While this study is limited to the Northern Tier countries, the conclusions reached are of some interest and relevance to other Muslim countries.

This study employs two separate terms—*Islamic* and *Islamist*—in discussing religious politics in Pakistan. *Islamic* refers generally to issues pertaining to the religion of Islam; *Islamist* refers to Islam as a modern political movement, especially “fundamentalist” movements, since *fundamentalist* is a misleading term.

This report was prepared within the International Security and Defense Policy Program of RAND’s National Defense Research Institute, a federally funded research and development center sponsored by the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It was prepared for the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, and it should be of interest to members of the U.S. defense and foreign policy communities concerned with the Middle East; with U.S. relations with Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan; with U.S. support for the Afghan mujahidin (freedom fighters); and with the future of Islamic radicalism in the Islamic world. Events occurring after August 1990 are not reflected in this study.

## SUMMARY

Pakistan's fundamentalist parties are unlikely to come to power in the foreseeable future. Although they represent an important part of the political spectrum and play a disproportionately large role in the formulation of national policy goals, they almost certainly cannot parlay this influence into an ability to take power:

- The parties have never fared well in national elections, garnering no more than 10 percent of the vote;
- The fundamentalists possess no charismatic leadership capable of commanding a widespread national support;
- The fundamentalist parties to date are essentially conservative on national issues rather than radical or revolutionary; rival radical secular parties such as the Pakistan's People's Party (PPP) can promote a more sweeping social agenda in the event of severe dissatisfaction with the status quo;
- Former President Zia adopted many Islamist<sup>1</sup> policies; the fundamentalists no longer represent a fresh political alternative and are partially associated with the Zia regime's failures and shortcomings;
- Islam has been widely promulgated as the "unifying element" of Pakistan's diverse ethnic makeup. Nonetheless, to the non-Punjabi population, the Punjabi elite has invoked this ideology to defend their dominance of the "Islamic" status quo, ignoring legitimate regional and ethnic grievances.
- The army, which views itself as the chief pillar of Pakistani stability and security, would be extremely reluctant to let a fundamentalist party achieve power in Pakistan and thereby gain control over the army.
- The divided religious leadership in Pakistan cannot reach a consensus on implementing Islamic law and would disagree on both methods and content.
- Most elements of Pakistani society recognize that any attempt to impose an Islamic order would be highly divisive.

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<sup>1</sup>This study employs two distinct terms in its discussion of religious politics in Pakistan. *Islamic* is a general adjective used in reference to the religion of Islam. *Islamist* is used in reference to modern political movements based on Islam, including "Islamic fundamentalist" movements. The term *Islamist* is used in preference to "fundamentalist," which is both misleading and does not include the full range of Islamically based contemporary political movements.

- Islamic ideology is nothing new. Pakistan's *raison d'être* was to found a separate state for the Muslims of India; Pakistan was thus intrinsically bound with Islam from the outset. It has long proclaimed itself an "Islamic Republic," even though its founder had envisaged a more secular state. Its short history has been one of struggle between religious parties seeking to impose the full corpus of religious law (the Shari'a) and secular parties more interested in socialist policies or regional issues.

Islam entered more fully into the political debate when former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (father of Benazir Bhutto) turned to Islam to salvage his failing policies and popularity in the mid-1970s. Bhutto's attempts to equate socialism with Islamic egalitarianism and social justice did not win him sufficient support and his growing opposition rallied around Islamic slogans and programs, leading to Bhutto's overthrow in 1977 by General Zia ul-Haqq.

Zia's Islamization campaign brought Islamist policies to a high point in Pakistan, although many believed that he manipulated Islamic ideology to legitimate his authoritarian rule, which never underwent full, open elections. Zia's policies changed several important areas of national life: penal law, education, the court system, Islamic taxation, the elimination of interest, the enforcement of tighter moral codes, and the encouragement of *de facto* limits to freedom of discussion on Islamic topics. The austerities of the Zia period were compounded by the presence of martial law for most of his rule. In the end, however, Zia's program did not touch the core laws of Pakistani society nor did they affect the basic economic or political systems of the country, or the military.

Zia supported the key Islamist party, Jama'at-i-Islami, which advocates the full adoption of Islamic law in place of Pakistan's mixture of Anglo-Muhammadan law established in British India. The Jama'at has developed widespread influence in diverse circles of Pakistani society, especially in the realm of education. It possesses a strong and tough student wing, which has played prominent roles in past demonstrations and in intimidating the opposition. The Jama'at enjoys close ties with Afghan fundamentalist mujahidin (freedom fighter) groups and has reportedly had access to paramilitary training in the Afghan camps. Despite its rough street tactics, the Jama'at has won itself an important role as an ideological party whose founder, Abu'l A'la al-Mawdudi, remains even after his death a key thinker in the Sunni Muslim world.

Pakistan's Shi'a population, perhaps some 20 percent of the population, has been stirred to greater political action since the Islamic

revolution in Iran and the greater militancy of Sunni religious parties in Pakistan under Zia. The Shi'a, however, oppose the establishment of Shari'a law in Pakistan because they fear the imposition of Sunni law over their community. The Shi'a would prefer a secular state, which they believe would better safeguard their own political/religious rights.

While the Shi'a community looks to Iran for intellectual and religious leadership, Iran has had only limited ability to manipulate the community. Sunni religious parties are wary of Iranian support for the Shi'a community. If the Sunni Islamists came to power in Pakistan, they would probably develop some sense of rivalry toward Iran in seeking religious leadership for the Muslim world.

Because Pakistan is already an "Islamic Republic" and has undergone a process of "Islamization" under Zia, it is difficult to determine what further policies Islamists might pursue in Pakistan should they somehow attain power. In terms of Western interests, an Islamic social program in Pakistan would not be of direct concern except as it influenced democratic procedures, human rights, and especially foreign policy. It would be radical Islam's attitude toward the external world that would have sharp influence on U.S. interests.

The Islamists' key objections to the United States will remain in the following areas:

- They object to intimate U.S. ties with Israel, but as U.S. policy moves toward greater balance in Arab-Israeli affairs, this disadvantage will diminish.
- Islamists see the "permissiveness" of American culture and society, its strong secularism, individualism, consumerism, and perceived "lack of moral values" as a major threat to Islamic culture.
- Few Pakistanis have any confidence in the U.S. security commitment to Pakistan in the context of the Indian threat: The U.S. has twice remained pointedly neutral in Pakistan's wars with India. Possession of a nuclear weapon is perceived by virtually all Pakistanis as a national obligation.
- Should Islamist parties come to power in Pakistan in the future and dispense with democratic procedures or engage in perceived human rights violations, U.S. criticism, and possible financial pressure, will be deeply resented and condemned.
- Strong popular disaffection with U.S. policies could lead to mob action against U.S. interests, installations, and personnel such as took place in earlier Pakistani governments.

- Under social and economic hardship, Pakistani crowds are particularly susceptible to religiously inspired demagoguery, which can easily be turned against the United States. Islamist institutions in Pakistan maintain a strong anti-American cultural bias that surfaces easily, especially when the United States can be portrayed as leader of the "haves" versus the "have-nots," "corrupted," "allied with Israel" against the Arabs, or anti-Islamic. Their susceptibility to dependency theory and other Marxist interpretations pits the United States against Third World interests.<sup>2</sup> Even with a left-of-center populist Benazir Bhutto government in power, the United States was still the convenient butt of popular wrath by the 'ulama in the anti-Rushdie riots, even though the book had been published first in the UK. Many Pakistanis have also faulted the United States for perpetuating the war in Afghanistan over many years, thus forcing millions of refugees to remain a burden to Pakistan.
- The radical 'ulama and Islamists will attack the United States on a popular issue for domestic political gain rather than as part of an explicitly anti-American agenda.

None of this means that widespread admiration does not exist in Pakistan for U.S. democratic principles, its technology, concern for human rights, and living standards. But these values can be impugned with ease if Pakistani domestic frustrations—with any slight U.S. connection—get out of hand and are exploited politically.

Given Pakistan's political culture, the United States will probably be best advised to tread cautiously in extending its own political, cultural, and military presence there. As in most countries, the U.S. Embassy can discover broad reservoirs of support for U.S. policies and presence, but that support stems from a variety of motives including genuine admiration, similarity of policy goals, personal and political self-interest, and a desire to extract maximum benefit from U.S. largess.

The dilemma comes when close ties with parties, leaders, and social circles can blind the United States to the deterioration of the domestic political, economic, or social situation with which it will, in the end, be closely linked.

Pakistani fundamentalists themselves will always maintain some ambivalence toward U.S. resources and power. The United States, after all, has helped Pakistan against enemies whom the fundamentalists also fear: communists in Afghanistan, the USSR, and India (even though U.S. arms are not meant for use against India). Pakistan's

<sup>2</sup>See for example, Rubin, 1986.

historical roots, experience in losing Bangladesh and losing three wars to India, and fear of internal separatism tend to create feelings of insecurity that can help feed anti-U.S. paranoia. Even though the fundamentalists are not likely to come to power and wage an all-out vendetta against the United States, as has Tehran, they constitute a basic reservoir of latent hostility that must be kept in mind as a limiting factor to U.S. influence in Pakistan and a constraint on any Pakistani government for the indefinite future.

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## I. THE ROOTS OF FUNDAMENTALISM IN THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT

### PAKISTAN'S RELIGIOUS ORIGINS

Pakistan is unique in the world: Carved out of India in 1947 as a homeland for Indian Muslims, it is the only modern country created solely on the basis of religion.<sup>1</sup> Pakistan thus cannot dissociate its character and identity from religion—Islam is its very *raison d'être*.

Because of Pakistan's origins in Islam, most countries of the Muslim world hold it in special regard, reinforcing Pakistan's own need to emphasize its Islamic character.

Islam is the only cohesive, unifying factor within the state to keep together the disparate elements of four major ethnic groups that have on occasion shown dangerous leanings toward separatism.<sup>2</sup> Islam is the primary cultural characteristic that distinguishes Pakistan from its chief opponent, India.

A succession of Pakistani leaders has had recourse to "Islamic policies" in an attempt to legitimate their rule during times of political, social, and economic discontent.

Religiously oriented political parties play significant roles within the national political spectrum, lending Islamist policies<sup>3</sup> further weight in the political process.

The overall growth of Islamic sentiment in the Muslim world has been reflected in Pakistan itself:

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<sup>1</sup>Israel has an ethnic component in addition to the religious.

<sup>2</sup>The four major ethnic groupings are the Punjabis (66 percent), the Sindhis (13 percent), the Pashtuns (8 percent), and the Baluch (3 percent), who make up the four provinces of the country; the population also includes some 8 percent Muhajirs, or Muslim immigrants from India of mixed ethnic background, but mostly Urdu speakers from India's Uttar Pradesh State. See Harrison, 1986. Pakistan's fears of separatism in this regard are not simply theoretical: Bangladesh had been an integral part of Pakistan—its "East Wing"—until growing discontent with centralized misrule from Islamabad led to the revolt, enabling it to break away in 1971 and form an independent state—a shattering loss in political, economic, and psychological terms for the 24-year-old Pakistani state.

<sup>3</sup>This study employs two distinct terms in its discussion of religious politics in Pakistan. *Islamic* is a general adjective used in reference to the religion of Islam. *Islamist* is used in reference to modern political movements based on Islam, including "Islamic fundamentalist" movements. The term *Islamist* is used in preference to "fundamentalist," which is both misleading and does not include the full range of Islamically based contemporary political movements.

- Pakistan has leaned heavily on its own religious credentials in an effort to win political and economic support from the Arab world, and to alleviate its isolation in the region.
- The communist takeover in Afghanistan and subsequent Soviet invasion deeply involved Pakistan in the anticommunist, anti-Soviet jihad (Holy War) that powerfully regenerated Islamic sentiment both in Afghanistan and Pakistan; the Pakistani government under President Zia ul-Haqq gave the Afghan mujahidin (freedom fighters) full support, channeled foreign aid to them, and permitted them to operate from sanctuaries on Pakistani soil.

### THE ROOTS OF ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM IN INDIA

Islamic "fundamentalist" ideals predate the creation of Pakistan to the eighteenth century when Indian Muslims were concerned over the decline of Islam in the subcontinent. The religion was losing its vitality, was faced by the Hindu community's growing power, and had been compromised even by India's Muslim rulers, who sought to maintain state power by compromising politically and even theologically with Hinduism.

The arrival of British power in India proved particularly traumatic for Muslims because they had ruled in the subcontinent for many centuries.<sup>4</sup> As British power consolidated itself at the expense of Muslim dynasties and states, eating away continuously at the state power of Islam, Indian Muslims grew increasingly traumatized and determined to reinvigorate their society, finding the reasons for the decline of Muslim power in the ideological laxity and ossification of traditional practice. Many movements sprang up that aimed at purifying, reforming, and deepening Islam's role in society and at strengthening the position of Indian Muslims under British rule. The barbs of the reformist movements were even directed against the 'ulama (religious scholars) whose attitudes toward non-Muslim authority were perceived as weak and acquiescent. Indeed, many of these 'ulama went on to develop an extensive body of theory and practice in proclaiming jihad and fighting to expel the infidel British rulers of India from the country.<sup>5</sup> Ideas stressing a return to basic

<sup>4</sup>The Muslims had ruled most of northern India from the twelfth century on, much of the south since the fifteenth century, and nearly all of India was consolidated under the brilliant Muslim Moghul Empire in 1526. See Smith, 1958.

<sup>5</sup>India's two major religious schools, the Deobandis and the Barelvis, developed a broad doctrine to combat the British colonial presence and to emphasize a Pan-Islamic outlook. While this movement had its roots in the eighteenth century, its most dramatic expression came in the massive Indian Mutiny of 1857 against British rule. See Roy, 1985, pp. 55-58.

principles of Islam<sup>6</sup> were carried on in the traditions and teachings of the great Indian theological school at Deoband and the Barelvi schools.

"Fundamentalist" ideas, in a general sense then, have a long lineage in the subcontinent—a tradition shared by the territory that was to become Pakistan in 1947. Indeed, many of these views are better described by the term "Islamist" rather than "fundamentalist." Contemporary Islamists, drawing on the reform roots of the past, seek to establish the just Islamic society, under the application of Islamic law, as a fulfillment of God's design. Rather than seeking to return to the past, however, most Islamists in the Muslim world represent a profoundly modern movement. These movements are led by those possessing modern, often technical, and certainly secular university education, who look to the roots of Islam to provide guidelines for the moral issues of contemporary society. The Islamists fully expect to draw on modern technological society—putting it at the service of the Islamic state and society. Their movement is profoundly political in character, based on political movements, the use of political parties, and modern techniques of political mobilization. In their view, the state must assume the critical obligation of applying Islamic principles to modern society to attain the just society. These ideas find full resonance in modern Pakistani Islamic thinking today.

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<sup>6</sup>Messianic movements can be traced back even earlier to the sixteenth century in which the traditional practices of the orthodox 'ulama were placed under assault. See a first-class research manuscript by Jones, 1988, p. 49.

## II. FUNDAMENTALIST POLICIES SINCE THE CREATION OF PAKISTAN

### THE MODEST EARLY ROLE OF ISLAM IN THE STATE

It is important to remember that Pakistan has been an Islamic republic since 1952. The real meaning of this designation, however, has been roundly debated from the outset of its existence. For although Pakistan was founded as a Muslim homeland, it was not at all the intention of its founder, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, that the state should be theocratic or ruled by the Shari'a (Islamic law). While Jinnah used Islam's powerful appeal to attract the masses to his Muslim League party and to the idea of establishing a separate Muslim state, he was a profound secularist whose ultimate genius lay in hammering together a diverse and pragmatic coalition of interest groups to make the creation of Pakistan possible.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, many of the religious elements among the Indian Muslim population, including the 'ulama, actually opposed its creation at the outset, correctly believing that Jinnah did not have a true Islamic state in mind.<sup>2</sup> For practical reasons, the 'ulama ultimately came around to accept the concept of Pakistan, but remained determined that the new Pakistani state should become a state ruled by the Shari'a. Religious parties quickly proliferated, determined to pursue just this cause.

Despite the existence of these religious parties, one of the striking features of Pakistani politics is that up until the early 1970s, modernist, quasi-secular policies have dominated the more traditional religious elements within the country. Two successive constitutions of 1956 and 1962 had clearly avoided the implementation of any Islamic ideology.<sup>3</sup> In fact, the 1962 Constitution went so far as to initially omit from the 1956 Constitution the designation of Pakistan as an "Islamic Repub-

<sup>1</sup>See Sayeed, 1980, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup>See Taylor, 1983, p. 189. The 'ulama have always had trouble in accepting the idea of smaller political units under Islam. Since Islam basically sees religion as the sole principle behind the creation of the Muslim ummah, or religious community, it has been uncomfortable with the idea of states formed primarily on ethnic or regional bases. In the case of India, the 'ulama were concerned that the creation of a Pakistan would leave tens of millions of Indian Muslims still within the Indian state, even after the creation of a Pakistan. And this was indeed the case, leaving today's Muslims in India an even weaker minority community than they would have been had India never been partitioned.

<sup>3</sup>Esposito, 1986, pp. 336-338.

lic," only to be compelled to restore it later.<sup>4</sup> Islam had appeared in politics primarily in the sectarian strife and rioting that played a large role in the national political arena, especially during the violent 1952 anti-Ahmadi movement spearheaded by the religious parties that sought to declare the highly heterodox Ahmadi sect as non-Islamic. But domestic policies generally reflected little of Islam as an ideology.

### **ISLAMIC IDEOLOGY ENTERS A SECULAR PARTY**

The first major shift in this pattern came from the unlikely source of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (father of Benazir Bhutto), a profoundly secularist, socialist, Western-educated individual who led the populist Pakistan People's Party (PPP) to victory in 1971. As Bhutto's flagging socialist policies led him into increasing political and economic difficulties in the mid-1970s, he turned to Islam to justify his unpopular rule. It was Bhutto who actually acceded to the demands of the religious parties to declare the Ahmadi sect as non-Islamic. He propounded that his policies of socialism were fully in accord with Islam, and that Islam basically advocated an egalitarian social and economic program ("Musawat-i-Muhammadi"). Bhutto's own background, ideologies, and style nonetheless tended to belie his interest late in the day in Islam and were not convincing to the religious parties that led the Islamic opposition to Bhutto, culminating in street rioting, the final overthrow of Bhutto, and ultimate execution by General Zia ul-Haq. But Islam was now firmly implanted in the ideological debate of the country on left and right.

### **PROFILE OF AN ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALIST PARTY**

Of all the religious parties that first emerged in the new Pakistani state, the Jama'at-i-Islami (the Islamic Assembly) of Mawlana Mawdudi (who died in 1979) was the most influential. Mawdudi is one of the central figures of modern Islamist thinking in the entire Muslim world, whose ideas about the role of the Muslim and the state in today's secular world have had profound influence on Islamist thinkers everywhere. Unlike more traditional religious parties that tended to represent clerical networks aiming at building religious influence in society, Mawdudi's Jama'at focuses on political means to the attainment of power. The Jama'at seeks to build a contemporary political party organized along disciplined—some would say militant—hierarchical lines, with the goal of

<sup>4</sup>See Fischer, 1982, p. 106.

establishing a state ruled by Islam.<sup>5</sup> To impose an Islamic order, the Jama'at aims at gaining control of the state mechanism. It maintains broad contacts with foreign Islamist parties and receives financial support from Saudi Arabia,<sup>6</sup> partially reflecting the austere Islamic views that characterize Wahhabi Islam in Saudi Arabia.

Mawdudi's commitment to democracy as a goal was extremely limited. Similar to other authoritarian figures, Mawdudi seemed interested in the democratic process only insofar as it would help the Jama'at gain power; he had little belief in vouchsafing the future of an Islamic state to the whims of the unenlightened masses.<sup>7</sup> Mawdudi's Jama'at has nonetheless been very successful in acquiring a following among students, university circles, the media, many professionals, military officers, and the lower middle class. It extends its influence through wings of the party representing students, labor, and women's groups.

The party has not shrunk from using bullyboy tactics in the street to intimidate opposition.<sup>8</sup> Jama'at student organizers were among the most effective elements in organizing the highly disruptive street demonstrations that ultimately brought down Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1977. The Jama'at has remained consistently well armed and has not hesitated to enter into armed struggles with opponents, especially in universities. It also maintains close ties with the Afghan mujahidin and enjoys free access to Afghan mujahidin training camps where many fear its armed strength is enhanced.<sup>9</sup> The Jama'at has nonetheless remained more an ideological movement than a successful political party; this weakness has been consistently demonstrated at the polls.

Indeed, despite the intellectual and theoretical depth of Mawdudi's own thinking, the Jama'at has been highly intolerant of other viewpoints within Pakistani society. Its hold on university circles and harassment of opponents have served to intimidate others from speaking out against it. Press editors are reluctant to oppose the Jama'at in

<sup>5</sup>Taylor, 1983, p. 191.

<sup>6</sup>See Haqqani, 1987a, p. 24. Also see Ahmed Rashid, 1987, p. 28.

<sup>7</sup>Mawdudi's basic principles of Islamic politics are summed up by William Richter (1981) as follows: (1) the sovereignty of Allah (not the people), (2) the state should be ruled by a single man, (3) the ruler should be assisted by an advisory council with the qualifications for applying Islamic law, (4) no political parties and no opposition, (5) non-Muslims may not hold policy positions but may reside safely in the state, (6) minorities must vote as separate electorates. See Richter, 1981, p. 151. For a very critical discussion of Mawdudi's principles, philosophy, and political style, see Alavi, 1988, p. 93.

<sup>8</sup>Alavi, 1988, pp. 94-95. Another observer describes the Jama'at as "fielding the meanest and most effective student union in the country." See Ispahani, 1987.

<sup>9</sup>See Ispahani, 1987.

print.<sup>10</sup> The overall atmosphere of former President Zia ul-Haq's Islamization campaign has reportedly encouraged an intellectual and cultural intolerance in Pakistan that has lowered the standards of educational and intellectual discourse. This trend was further exacerbated while policies of Islamization were accompanied by the rigors of martial law, whose restrictions began to be lifted in 1987. The Jama'at rode high under the early days of martial law, even though it ultimately grew disillusioned with Zia's heavy leaning on the military and lack of elections. Its rigid ideology and unwillingness to participate in narrower, sectarian Islamic politics tended to alienate the Jama'at from other religious parties. Indeed, as a broad ideological party that does not cater to narrow regional, ethnic, or parochial/sectarian elements of society, the Jama'at is a more "modern" party in seeking a wider following.<sup>11</sup>

Mawdudi has unquestionably been the primary Islamist figure in Pakistan over the last several decades. His party came into its own with its singularly close working relationship with President Zia—its nondemocratic ideology partially justifying Zia's own disinclination to hold full-fledged elections in the country. Mawdudi's party also supported Zia's moves toward application of the Shari'a in key segments of the state and his Afghan policies. While many observers believed that the religious parties' mobilization activity had diminished in the Zia period, this may well have been due to their belief that their overall goals did not require it as long as Zia himself was forwarding his Islamization campaign; many believe that the religious parties will return to their former activism now that they no longer enjoy links with power.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, the serious demonstrations exploiting the Salman Rushdie book, *The Satanic Verses*, in early 1989 were led by the Jama'at (preceding any action by Ayatollah Khomeini), had marked anti-British and anti-American overtones, and were aimed specifically at weakening Benazir Bhutto's government. The future of the Jama'at is one of the critical indicators by which to gauge the fortunes of Pakistan's Islamist movement in the future.

<sup>10</sup>"I wouldn't dare," said a newspaper editor. "They would beat us up." See "Living on the Edge: A Survey of Pakistan, *The Economist*, January 17, 1987, p. 11.

<sup>11</sup>The Jama'at continues to reach out to newer constituencies: Its newest leader, Qazi Hussain Ahmad, is a businessman from Peshawar who is interested in spreading Jama'at influence into the bazaari and business classes. See Jones, 1988, p. 164.

<sup>12</sup>See Haqqani, 1988.

## OTHER RELIGIOUS PARTIES

The other main religious parties in Afghanistan are more traditional in character and often at odds with the new Islamist trends. Two major parties represent the 'ulama of the two major schools of Muslim traditional education: The 'ulama of the Deobandi theological school (madrasah), primarily represented by the Jam'iyat-ul-'Ulama-i-Islam (JUI—The Islamic 'Ulama Society), and the 'ulama of the Bareilvi school, mainly represented by the Jam'iyat-ul-'Ulama-i-Pakistan (JUP—The 'Ulama Society of Pakistan). These parties, so dominated by the 'ulama and other more traditional religious authorities and mosque networks,<sup>13</sup> are uncomfortable with the more modern, politicized approach of Mawdudi's Jama'at and with Mawdudi's own nonclerical background. However, they have cooperated periodically with the Jama'at and share its goal of an Islamic state, despite differences in tactics and outlook.

Two other significant religious parties are well outside the clerical 'ulama circles: the Ahl-i-Hadith (People of the Prophetic Traditions) and the Ahl-i-Quran (People of the Quran). The Ahl-i-Hadith is radical in its jettisoning of the classical schools of jurisprudence and in seeking a return to the fundamentals of the Quran and the Prophet's teachings. It is influenced by Saudi Wahhabi (fundamentalist) thinking but does not rigidly reject the deep mystical (Sufi) traditions of South Asian Islam as do the Saudis. The Ahl-i-Quran is even more radical in insisting on a return to the Quran alone as a basis for Islam. Although a small party, it has had much intellectual influence on Islamic circles.<sup>14</sup>

## ZIA'S ISLAMIZATION CAMPAIGN

As noted above, the modernist, quasi-secular approach to Islam had appeared to be the dominant ideological trend in Pakistan by 1970.<sup>15</sup> Yet by 1977, with the fall of Prime Minister Bhutto and his PPP, and the accession of General Zia ul-Haqq to power, the role of Islamic ideology in politics had reached a critical turning point. In fact, Zia's presidency brought the fortunes of the Islamists to the high watermark in Pakistani politics. Numerous factors led to this development:

<sup>13</sup>See Jones, 1988, p. 153.

<sup>14</sup>For an assessment of the historical roots of these movements, see Jones, 1988, pp. 69–72.

<sup>15</sup>Richter, 1981, p. 141.

- The public recognized that even if Islam in principle had always been the ideological basis for Pakistani politics, actual Islamic policies received mainly lip service from Pakistani administrations.
- Prime Minister Bhutto's use of Islam in the 1970s was primarily a justification of his socialist policies, particularly in his use of the slogan "Islamic Egalitarianism."
- The nine parties who formed the opposition groups to Prime Minister Bhutto's regime in 1977 (The Pakistan National Alliance—PNA) included all the religious parties and adopted the slogan calling for the Nizam-i-Mustafa, or Order of the Prophet, as the basis for future Pakistani policy.
- The growth of Islamist movements and attitudes elsewhere in the Muslim world inevitably affected Pakistani Islamic movements as well.
- Zia's personal religious beliefs stressed the need for strong Islamic policies for the country.
- Whatever the degree of Zia's personal faith and commitment to religion, Islam also served him as a crucial legitimating instrument for his nondemocratic, martial law regime. Debate has raged over the degree to which Zia may have been simply exploiting Islam for his own political purposes. His personal and political motivations cannot be satisfactorily sorted out; both are clearly present.
- Zia sought the support of the religious parties in formulating his own policies, both in domestic and foreign policy; religious party support for his Afghan policies was quite important for a strategy that risked the national security in its confrontation with the Soviet Union.

## **ZIA'S ISLAMIC POLICIES**

Zia undertook new legislation designed to increase the role of Islam in national life. As committed as Zia was to these innovations, it is also significant that he preserved several critical areas of national life from being touched by any Islamic legislation: the constitution, the military, and the nation's economic system. But Zia's Islamic policies did affect many key areas of national life.

### **Criminal Law and Penal Codes**

The consumption of alcohol was banned, and newer, more draconian punishments including whipping, amputation of limbs, and even

stoning to death were officially sanctioned. On the other hand, apart from public whipping, most of these punishments in practice have been used only sparingly or not at all.<sup>16</sup> The state has also required greater observation of Islamic obligations such as fasting during the Holy Month of Ramazan and the time granted for daily prayers.

### Education and Culture

English has given way to Urdu in many areas, especially in schools. National dress has been emphasized over Western clothing. More courses of Islamic instruction have been required in schools, and censorship of "un-Islamic" materials and activities has increased.<sup>17</sup>

### Economics

Many Muslim states have wrestled with the problem of defining "Islamic economics." Islamic law clearly stipulates that interest is forbidden—primarily because it has been associated with exploitation—but Islamic banking institutions in many countries have gotten around this problem to a major degree through various schemes of equity participation that functionally serve to determine the value of invested or borrowed money. Taxation according to religious law—the use of zakat, a welfare tax, and 'ushr, an agricultural tax—has been implemented, but it has created dissension. The Shi'a, for example, feel unfairly taxed because the disbursement of zakat funds by the state goes for the use of Sunni community institutions. The rights to private property and opposition to the nationalization of industry (a sore point during the Bhutto era of socialist practices) have also been reaffirmed.<sup>18</sup>

In the end, a key issue for Islamic economics is to define the meaning and role of social justice in economics as stipulated by Islam. Clearly, concepts of welfare, protection of the poor, and nonexploitation of society are core values of Islam, but they need to be integrated with basic Islamic acceptance of free enterprise. Bhutto's talk of "Islamic Egalitarianism" was a more radical attempt at reconciling the

<sup>16</sup>See Richter, 1981, p. 145. Considerable internal controversy has accompanied the passing of such legislation, and even more over its implementation. Physicians have refused to supervise amputations of the hand for theft as designated by law—rendering it a dead letter. Stoning as the penalty for adultery, for example, was struck down by the Shari'a Court on the grounds that it is repugnant to Islam and not stipulated in the Quran. Although a newly reconstituted court reversed this ruling, it has been almost impossible to implement in practice due to extremely rigorous eyewitness requirements to establish guilt. See Esposito, 1986, p. 348.

<sup>17</sup>Esposito, 1986, pp. 355–356.

<sup>18</sup>Richter, 1981, pp. 148–149.

two concepts of socialism and Islam; indeed, one committee on Islamization for the Ministry of Finance suggested in 1980 that Islamic economics might entail outright rejection of capitalism.<sup>19</sup> Zia was not willing to go so far.

### **Restructuring of the Court System**

To implement Islamic law, the structure and character of the court system must be determined. Implementation of Islamic law can in effect challenge the entire system of Western law as previously applied in Pakistan; indeed, even the very character of Western democracy can be theoretically challenged as incompatible with Islamic law. The issue of whether democracy is appropriate to Islam has been much debated in Pakistan; as noted above, Mawdudi believed that it was not. (But no religious parties have actually advocated an end to democracy.) Zia's first step toward a greater reliance upon the Shari'a was the establishment of Shari'a Benches in the High Courts that pass on the degree to which existing laws—when challenged—were compatible with the Shari'a.<sup>20</sup> A Federal Shari'a Court was subsequently established. At no time, however, was the entire replacement of the traditional corpus of Anglo-Muhammadan law, as existed in British India and later in Pakistan, an issue; the goal was to purge that corpus where necessary to make it as compatible as possible with the Shari'a.<sup>21</sup>

### **The Political System**

The core question in implementing Islamic law lies in whether multiparty, democratic forms of government are fundamentally compatible with Islamic governance. Indeed, this issue is perhaps the preeminent legal/philosophical challenge for all aspiring Islamic states. Islamic law does not explicitly address the question of democracy; answers can stem only from interpretation of the Shari'a. In Pakistan's case, the issue was more than theoretical: Zia's continuing reluctance to hold any elections and his unwillingness down to his death to permit the participation of political parties in the elections were highly contentious issues for the decade of Zia's rule. Many charged that he was simply manipulating Islam to further his autocratic rule.

A key step in Islamization was Zia's appointment in June 1981 of a Council of Islamic Ideology whose task was to consider the very nature

<sup>19</sup>Esposito, 1986, p. 354.

<sup>20</sup>Richter, 1981, p. 146.

<sup>21</sup>Esposito, 1986, p. 350.

of Pakistan's form of government. The Council's ultimate findings included some basic guidelines that could well serve other governments in the Muslim world as they deliberate this issue:

- According to Islam, shura (consultation) is essential in the affairs of state and is synonymous with people's participation.
- Consultation in Islam has the following three aspects:
  - Consultation in affairs of state
  - Consultation in the election of the head of state
  - Consultation in the election of the Majlis-i Shura (Federal Advisory Council)
- A presidential form of government is "nearer to Islam."
- Elections are "not non-permissible" in Islam.<sup>22</sup>

Following Zia's death in August 1988, the Pakistani Supreme Court reversed Zia's ruling and decreed that political parties could participate, as parties, in the election.<sup>23</sup>

Prior to Zia's campaign for Islamization in Pakistan, few challenges to Anglo-Muhammadan law had existed. The main exception was the 1961 Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, which moved such issues as marriage, divorce, and inheritance within the purview of Islamic law. This step was—and still is—opposed by many in the de facto restrictions it places on women's rights within the family. It is strongly upheld by the religious parties and Benazir Bhutto has herself not felt strong enough to challenge it.<sup>24</sup>

### **THE FINAL SHOWDOWN: THE FAILURE OF THE SHARI'A BILL**

In the final analysis, however, even the judicial system was not thoroughly transformed by Zia. Common law remains the basis of most legal procedure, rather than the Shari'a, which has been introduced only selectively.<sup>25</sup> This, indeed, is the very objection of the

<sup>22</sup>Esposito, 1986, p. 345.

<sup>23</sup>See Crossette, 1988a. This ruling in fact was a decisive turning point for the prospects of the PPP and Benazir Bhutto in the November 1988 elections; it allowed the PPP to campaign from a position of strength as a solidly organized national political party.

<sup>24</sup>See Crossette, 1989b; also see Walsh, 1989. As this latter article notes, "Ms. Bhutto is hamstrung by yet another piece of Zia-era legislation: a constitutional amendment protecting all laws passed during the 1977-1985 martial-law period. Those laws can't be touched by the courts; only a two-thirds majority vote in the legislature can repeal them."

<sup>25</sup>See Haqqani, 1987b, p. 24.

fundamentalists who do, in fact, seek sweeping implementation of the Shari'a. To that end, in 1985 the Jama'at introduced a highly controversial Shari'a bill into the Parliament that would permit the retention only of those laws judged by the Federal Shari'a Court to be consistent with the Shari'a. Implementation of the bill would have meant elimination of the bulk of the legal corpus of Pakistan's judicial system.

The sweeping nature of this proposal smoked out surprising reservoirs of doubts about the desirability of adopting pure Shari'a law in Pakistan. Apart from the objection of secularists, the bill was opposed by Westernized elites, most educated women, liberals, Shi'a and other minority religious groups, even the two other major religious parties (the JUP and the JUI), and most of the government itself.

- Nearly all feared that it would prove divisive and sectarian in nature.
- Most in government saw the bill as essentially transferring power from the legislature to the judiciary since determination of the religious validity of all legislation would henceforth rest with the courts. Suggestions for compromise within the Islamic tradition of *ijtihad*, or innovation through interpretation, were strongly opposed by the 'ulama on grounds that there could be "no compromise on the enforcement of divine laws."<sup>26</sup> In the end, the politicians in the assembly and the cabinet procrastinated for several years without passing the bill, recognizing that it lacked popular support.<sup>27</sup>

## THE EXTENT OF ISLAMIZATION

Pakistan under Zia, therefore, moved a long way toward the Islamization of the country. Yet much of it remained symbolic in character, designed to demonstrate a commitment without fundamentally changing the character of national life and the basic social system. In this sense it did not represent a revolution in Pakistani life in the way that the Russian revolution changed the face of Russia, or the Islamic revolution in Iran removed whole classes and value systems from power. The main change involved a major shift in outlook on the role of Islam in government. Because so much of the change also involves intense partisan politics and the character of Zia's own rule, the Islamization process was and is highly controversial.

<sup>26</sup>Haqqani, 1987b, pp. 24-25.

<sup>27</sup>Zia in the end was compelled to impose the bill by decree in June 1988 after dissolving the cabinet and the National Assembly. It did not survive Zia's death, however. See Baxter, 1988a.

## WINNERS AND LOSERS

Islamization politics has involved much more than mere religious or ideological preferences; in the end, it is the immediate, concrete political, economic, and social impact of Islamization that will determine most Pakistanis' view of the process, rather than any theological conviction. Islamization's impact upon social processes in Pakistan has created a variety of winners and losers:

- Islamization has been a net setback for the Westernized and secularist elite whose influence in an Islamic Pakistan has been diminished and whose intellectual freedom has been constrained.
- Women have suffered setbacks in their legal and social freedoms, and many—especially the more educated and Westernized—have organized against Islamization. They have studied Islam themselves to better interpret and debate the substance of Islam with *Islamic authorities*, often deriving much more liberal interpretations than the clergy has advocated.<sup>28</sup>
- Many women have entered the realm of political activism for the first time through the religious parties, particularly the Jama'at, which maintains a strong women's wing within the party. For these women, the Islamist movement has been an entree into politics, albeit within certain constraints. This phenomenon is true in other Muslim countries as well, although it is by no means the major vehicle to politicization for most Muslim women.
- Islamization has tended to stifle freedom of inquiry and intellectual and artistic independence. But it has been martial law, which accompanied most of the Islamization campaign, that contributed significantly to this as well.
- Professionals in many fields have also suffered. In law, for example, the wider use of Islamic jurisprudence has weakened the position of those trained in Western law and strengthened the role of the clergy as teachers and interpreters of Shari'a law.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, a key goal of the Islamists has been to infiltrate most areas of government to impose their beliefs upon the country through control of its bureaucratic mechanisms. This goal has remained well out of reach.
- For the military, Islamization has created ambivalence. On the one hand, Zia's administration in the name of Islam provided

<sup>28</sup>For a discussion of women's opposition to Islamization, see Keddie, 1987, p. 41.

<sup>29</sup>See Esposito, 1986, p. 350.

the rationale for placing the military into positions of power at the local and provincial level. Middle-level military officers in particular—who come from more traditional backgrounds, compared to top military officers, who stem from the elite—have also been more culturally sympathetic to the Islamization campaign.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, the military has always been aware of major disadvantages for the army in maintaining continued military rule: The army tends to be corrupted by exposure to civilian ruling procedures; is often forced to intervene against the public in a law-and-order capacity, which it does not like; and must accept responsibility for unpopular political measures.<sup>31</sup> While the army may have sympathy for the ideological and disciplinary values of Islam as the basis for national ethical behavior, it is also not about to allow the mullahs to come to power and dominate the military. This was never considered a possibility even under Zia—himself right out of the army tradition.

- Landowners and the business class have not fared better or worse under Islamization; the process has not affected their rights to private property. Most have been more comfortable with the conservative social aspects of Islam.
- The 'ulama has begun to move more firmly into the economy. They have felt greater need to fund their programs and institutions and have become aware of greater opportunity for international contacts with economic and bazaari circles in other Muslim countries, especially the Gulf. An "age of the 'ulama-entrepreneurs" may have begun as these figures play larger domestic and foreign roles in the use of capital and financial institutions—as in other Muslim countries.<sup>32</sup>
- Lower-middle-class artisans and small-town businessmen have developed a greater political role as the economy evolves and the cities begin to reflect new bourgeois values, as well as the impact of rural migration, with its influx of Islamist sympathies. Thus, Islamic politics and the emergence of a greater role for the lower-middle and lower classes are partially interdependent. A critical question is whether future public support for Islamization will grow or decline.
- The traditional clergy recognizes that it must move education out of the traditional religious disciplines and into the sciences

<sup>30</sup>Esposito, 1986, p. 362.

<sup>31</sup>Cohen, 1986, p. 323.

<sup>32</sup>See Jones, 1988, pp. 141-142.

and European languages if it is to succeed in the contemporary world and the struggle for political influence.

- Islamic politics as a whole has growing appeal for the new urban lower classes and recently arrived rural workers. For them, Islamist policies are more "advanced" than the primitive, traditional, or feudal forms of Islam that they left in the countryside, and are also sharply distinct from the Westernizing, "non-Pakistani" beliefs and life-styles of the elite and wealthy, which the newly emergent classes can neither identify with nor aspire to.<sup>33</sup>

The "popularity" of Islamization and the Islamist movement will likely remain in constant flux—a function of the concrete social, economic, and political benefits derived from it. While the elites may not like Islamization, the gradual emergence of middle-class and lower-middle-class elements may eventually strengthen the Islamic movement, particularly since Islam represents "native culture" much more than does the elite's "foreign culture." Islam thus becomes one of the symbols of class development, an expression of class rivalry and of new social fluidity—not to say struggle.

On the other hand, many Pakistanis question why Islam, which is supposed to be a positive rallying force and inspiration in the nation, in the hands of the Islamists has generally seemed to be a negating, nay-saying, prohibiting, and limiting force upon human life, a "negative Islam."<sup>34</sup> Indeed, Islam does not have to be negative, but that seems to be the path its political expression in Pakistan has taken.

If bourgeois, secular, individualistic values tend to characterize economically and technically advanced Western societies, those secularizing values are still a long way off from integrating Pakistani popular culture—for better or for worse. Islam remains a potent force on the political scene, whether formally supported by the government or not. Indeed, it can be argued that if the government does not move either to control or preempt the development of political Islam, the government itself may become a target of it.

<sup>33</sup>For an excellent discussion of the problem of social class and Islam in the Muslim world, see Fischer, 1982.

<sup>34</sup>Esposito, 1986, p. 361.

### III. PROBLEMS FACED BY FUNDAMENTALISM IN PAKISTAN

The future of the fundamentalists (Islamists) in Pakistan is uncertain; their program has faced numerous obstacles since the creation of the Pakistani state, and Islam has not always been a consistently unifying force in the country. Indeed, there are numerous areas in which Islam has been perceived as a negative force or the movement itself has suffered from fundamental weaknesses.

#### ISLAM AS A SLOGAN FOR PERPETUATING PUNJABI DOMINANCE

At the outset, Islam served admirably as a rallying point for Indian Muslims, leading to the establishment of the independent state of Pakistan. Once the state was established, however, the invocation of Islam was turned to different ends. The new state immediately faced serious problems of regionalism and ethnic rivalry: The Punjabis rapidly established themselves as the leading element of Pakistan, gaining key positions in the military and the bureaucracy; indeed the capital of the state is in Punjab province. Punjabi dominance remains a serious political problem in Pakistan today.

The non-Punjabi minorities dominant in the other provinces of Pakistan—the Pashtuns in the Northwest Frontier Province, the Baluch in Baluchistan, the Sindhis in Sind—resented Punjabi dominance. Many of them believed that the Punjabis invoked Islam in the name of national unification as an attempt to ignore legitimate regional grievances and an effort to characterize those grievances as a betrayal of the Pakistan principle.<sup>1</sup>

As a result, Islamist parties, especially Jama'at-i-Islami, have not fared well in the minority provinces; the Jama'at, more than any of the other parties, is subject to the charge of ignoring regional and ethnic grievances in favor of a "Pan-Islamic" approach.

<sup>1</sup>Islamic political vocabulary "was no more than a political argument that was used by the dominant Punjabis against the assertion of the new regional and linguistic ethnic identities of Bengalis, Sindhis, Pathans and Baluch" (Alavi, 1988, p. 73). This is the most cynical interpretation of the use of Islam by the state, but a view undoubtedly shared by many. On the other hand, one could more charitably say that Islam as a polity failed to breach regional differences and was an insufficient rallying force to overcome legitimate regional grievances.

- In Baluchistan province the religious parties are "generally viewed by the minorities as agents of the Punjabi-Muhajir [Muslim immigrants from India] establishment."<sup>2</sup>
- In Sind province, the fundamentalists have been unsuccessful in identifying their Islamist message with regional aspirations and are unsympathetic to Sindhi separatism, and the region is permeated with traditionalist Islam—especially Sufi (mystical) practices.<sup>3</sup>
- Only in the Northwest Frontier Province have Islamist parties had some success in recent times, mainly due to the Islamic zeal stimulated by the anti-Soviet jihad, which the Jama'at actively supports.<sup>4</sup>

In sum, Islamist parties and policies will not likely fare well as long as they are perceived to be insensitive to regional aspirations. The Islamists probably will not succeed in the minority provinces since they are not willing to fulfill regional aspirations for greater autonomy. Only if even more pressing grievances emerge on a national level will the Islamists find an issue they might successfully preempt for themselves. They do not monopolize any such issue at the moment.

#### IDENTIFICATION OF ISLAMIC POLICIES WITH FAILING POLICIES

"There is nothing like having a government that calls itself Islamic to discredit Islamism."<sup>5</sup> People seek fulfillment of their needs and aspirations from government, regardless of the government's coloration; similarly, failing policies cannot be vindicated simply by invoking Islam as the principle under which the policies were applied. However much Zia talked of his "Nizam-i-Mustafa," or "Order of the Prophet," as the basis of his Islamization program, it has been perceived by many as unsuccessful in several respects, as well as linked to repression and nondemocratic government. Some degree of cynicism about "Islamic politics" is thus inevitable when Islam is invoked to cover failure.

Islamic politics, of course, can fail, even if Islam itself cannot. Public cynicism will be directed at the policies and labels, not so much at

<sup>2</sup>See Harrison, 1986, p. 276.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 282

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 290.

<sup>5</sup>Quoted from Keddie, 1988, p. 26.

the faith. Nonetheless, subsequent leaders will find it harder to galvanize public opinion through trusty recourse to Islam as a political device—especially with a public that has “been there before.”

### **DISAGREEMENT OVER THE TYPE OF ISLAMIC LAW TO BE APPLIED**

While there may be some public acceptance of the increased application of Islamic law to Pakistani society,<sup>6</sup> specific implementation creates sharp—even volatile—differences among the many sectarian groups, which number 73 in all. Pakistani Shi'a communities, for example, perhaps some 20 percent of the population, object strongly to the wholesale application of Sunni Islamic law; given the choice, most Shi'a would actually prefer a secular government that would not impose Sunni Islam upon them.<sup>7</sup>

Further complications have arisen even among the Sunnis themselves. The growth of Islamization and the greater participation of religious parties in government have stimulated a profusion of publications in which the various sects not only strongly advocate their own positions, but vigorously attack their opponents among the 'ulama. This has raised the heat and level of rhetoric considerably.<sup>8</sup> The 'ulama themselves thus lack any consensus on how to implement Islamic law. The famous Munir Report of 1954, drawn up to investigate severe communal conflict at that time, observed that the investigation presented the world “with the sorry spectacle of Muslim divines no two of whom agreed on the definition of a Muslim, and who yet were practically unanimous that all who disagreed should be put to death.”<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Zia called a surprise referendum in December 1984 for approval of his Islamization program. While the elections were boycotted by the opposition—particularly since Zia was obviously using the referendum as a vote of support for himself instead of holding formal elections—an overwhelming majority supported the program. The magnitude of this victory was severely tarnished, however, by the small percentage of the electorate that actually participated. See Esposito, 1986, p. 360. In the end, few people are inclined to vote against Islam in principle; that was precisely Zia's ruse. One would surmise that such a ruse is quickly exhausted, however.

<sup>7</sup>The Shi'a, indeed, had expected Pakistan to be a secular state when it was founded; see Ahmed, 1987, p. 278.

<sup>8</sup>See Esposito, 1986, p. 364.

<sup>9</sup>Quoted in Smith, 1957, p. 233.

## IDENTIFICATION OF THE ISLAMISTS WITH ESSENTIALLY CONSERVATIVE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC POSITIONS

At no time have Pakistan's Islamist parties assumed the mantle of social revolutionary vanguard and champion of the rights of the lower classes.<sup>10</sup> The Jama'at and other Islamist parties have been essentially proponents of conservative social and economic views.<sup>11</sup> Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's PPP in the 1970s preempted for itself the role of spokesman for the lower classes in its emphasis on "Musawat-i-Muhammadi," or Islamic Egalitarianism. Islamist parties will have to change considerably if they are to successfully adopt political leadership of radical social and class issues in the future—unless this role is abandoned, or badly botched, by the PPP.<sup>12</sup>

The basically conservative social instincts of the Islamists have therefore tended to work in support of the existing economic order—except where they have demanded a greater role for the Islamist parties in government, as a basis for the dispensation of increased patronage. This striking social and economic conservatism of radical Islam is perhaps explained by two factors. (1) These parties have developed within a Sunni—as opposed to Shiite—state, where traditionally Islam has more readily compromised with the existing social order and the exercise of secular power. (2) Pakistan inherited a highly conservative—near feudal—social order upon taking over the Western provinces of India, in which mass politics had taken only modest root and where traditional elites were not prepared to be dislodged. Thus, the first such political effort to dislodge traditional elites in Pakistan came from the left (the PPP) and not the religious parties. Indeed, many of the other religious parties (apart from the Jama'at) enjoy strong support from feudal religious figures (pirs and makhdums) who represent the social order of the status quo. These circumstances could change in the future, however, as Pakistani politics becomes more populist.

<sup>10</sup>This is in sharp distinction to the role of the Shiite Islamist movement in Iran where it assumed a distinctly radical social agenda, championing support for the oppressed and downtrodden and seeking broad reform in the area of social justice. The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, one of the earliest modern Islamist movements, has also had a broader social agenda for the welfare of the masses.

<sup>11</sup>"The politicians and the religious leaders were alike restrained in their attacks on the [Zia] government by a strong apprehension that advocacy of political and economic radicalism would open the floodgates of mass politics." See Binder, 1986, p. 262.

<sup>12</sup>The Ayatollah Khomeini understood this very well when he commented early in the revolution that "the Revolution was not made in order to lower the price of watermelons."

### **THE ABSENCE OF A CLEAR-CUT ISLAMIC POLITICAL PROGRAM**

Islamists in most Muslim countries have generally been rather vague about the specific political, economic, and social policies they would adopt upon coming to power—other than stating they would be “Islamic.” While certainly able to exploit specific public grievance with the status quo, the Islamists have been unwilling or unable to spell out details of policy because the essential justification for the advocacy of an Islamic order is not based on grounds of efficacy, but on the belief that such an order is religiously right. In effect, campaigning on a specific Islamic platform designed to gain votes could be interpreted as near blasphemous: The Islamic order is God-ordained; it does not require practical justification or even popular approbation to be vindicated.<sup>13</sup>

### **LACK OF UNITY AND CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP**

Not only is the Islamic political agenda not fully clear, but the religious parties do not agree among themselves on a program. The movement is also hindered by the absence of any charismatic leader to spearhead the movement or seize the popular imagination.

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<sup>13</sup>Islamist politicians “urge the implementation of the sacred law for its own sake and in the pious expectation that such implementation will either be an efficient solution or bring some divine favor.” See Binder, 1986, p. 263.

#### IV. PROBLEMS OF THE SHI'A COMMUNITY

Shiite political activism in Pakistan has risen noticeably since the Islamic Revolution in Iran. This is not simply due to Iranian agitation or "export of the revolution," but also to the example of the success of that revolution, a growing sense of political self-consciousness in the face of growing Sunni religious/political assertiveness, and a desire for their own political rights within Pakistani society and politics. It was under Zia that the Shi'a first established their own political party. Indeed, the Shi'a are the only group to have successfully forced Zia's martial law regime to back down, in the face of Shiite demonstrations protesting the imposition of Sunni Islamic taxes upon the Shi'a community.<sup>1</sup>

Pakistan's Shi'a community is approximately 15 to 20 percent of the population, but there are no reliable statistics.<sup>2</sup> The Shi'a themselves are divided into two main groups: The Isma'ili Shi'a, who look to the Agha Khan as leader, have played a distinguished role in the history of the Muslim movement in India, and the Ithna 'Ashariya, or "Twelver" Sect majority, the same sect to which most Iranians belong. These Shi'a look to Iran as the center of their faith.

The clear minority status of the Shi'a in Pakistan is a political liability under any circumstances but is even more difficult under Sunni-oriented Islamization, where the Shi'a become second-class citizens.<sup>3</sup>

The Shi'a have therefore had to constantly struggle to gain their rights as a community. They claim they have often been deliberately provoked by violence from rabble-rousers among the Sunni 'ulama. For the Shi'a, the move toward an Islamic state under Zia was not good news, for they viewed it as leading to imposition of Sunni power and

<sup>1</sup>See Ahmed Rashid, 1987, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup>Munir D. Ahmed reports that the Shi'a themselves say their population is as much as 40 percent, while Sunnis estimate them to be 10 to 20 percent. See Ahmed, 1987, p. 275. Another Pakistani writer reports the Shi'a population at 25 percent; see Lodhi, 1988, p. 806.

<sup>3</sup>Despite the minority status of the Shi'a, several key figures in Pakistani politics have been of Shiite origin:

- The founder of Pakistan, Muhammad 'Ali Jinnah, was of Isma'ili background;
- Yahya Khan, former Commander in Chief of the Army, and then President of Pakistan from 1969 to 1971, was Shiite;
- Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, although a secularist, was reputed to be a Shiite as a protégé of a former Shiite President of Pakistan; his wife is also of Iranian descent. (See Ahmed, 1987, p. 280.)

Sunni law upon the Shi'a community. They have been among the sharpest opponents of Zia's Islamization campaign for that reason.

The earliest major political action taken by the Shi'a came with the 1953 first all-Pakistan Shi'a convention held to proclaim these concerns. Shi'a communal riots in Pakistan began in earnest in 1963, when the Shi'a felt threatened by Sunni mullahs and 'ulama in their push for a Sunni Islamic state. Under Bhutto in the 1970s the Shi'a were given assurances of their rights to a separate Shiite educational syllabus. Under Zia, however, this right was rescinded, and further moves were taken to impose Hanafi (Sunni) Islamic law, including Sunni religious taxation (zakat). Shi'a demonstrations in 1980 to publicly protest these steps were so vehement that they eventually forced Zia to concede on Sunni Islamic taxation, which was clearly designed to support Sunni institutions.<sup>4</sup> The Shi'a also demanded of Zia the right to equal representation in government. Emotions have run so high that in response to this political agitation, many Sunni clerics sought to have the Shi'a declared non-Muslim altogether.<sup>5</sup>

Under these circumstances, the Shi'a clearly prefer a secular state in which all religious status was irrelevant—as opposed to an Islamic state in which they would struggle constantly to protect their religious rights against the majoritarian Sunni state religion. Given their minority status, the Shi'a can hardly aspire to the establishment of a Shiite Islamic state in Pakistan. Their efforts are therefore directed at securing sectarian religious rights within the Sunni state.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup>See Auerbach, 1985.

<sup>5</sup>The state had declared another much more heterodox, quasi-Islamic sect of the Ahmadis to be non-Muslim in the previous decade, after more than ten years of ugly anti-Ahmadi persecutions, rioting, and killing. Whereas Christians and Hindus have clearly enjoyed a secure separate status within Pakistan as members of recognized religions, members of heterodox Muslim sects declared to be non-Muslim in a Muslim society suffer a blow to their civil status. Most of the details above on Shiite activism are drawn from Ahmed, 1987, pp. 281-283.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 1987, p. 285.

## **V. FOREIGN STATE INFLUENCES ON PAKISTANI RELIGIOUS POLITICS**

### **IRANIAN INFLUENCE ON PAKISTANI DOMESTIC POLITICS**

As is the case in other Muslim countries, the Islamic Republic of Iran has keen interest in the welfare of Pakistan's Shiite Muslims, most of whom look to Iran as the center of their faith. As always, the existence of a Shiite minority in a country complicates, if not actually compromises, Iran's geopolitical goals since it forces Iran to focus on the Shi'a, rather than the more universal Islamic message that Khomeini proclaimed. And such an Iranian focus on a specific minority in another country is usually perceived as interference in internal affairs, angers the non-Shi'a majority, and damages Iran's relations with the country as a whole. This is a factor in Iran's dealings with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Iraq, Lebanon, and Afghanistan, to name a few. Sunni fundamentalist leaders who might otherwise have an interest in Iran's broader religious message are alienated by what seems to be Shi'a favoritism.<sup>1</sup> Iran will probably never be able to resolve this dilemma satisfactorily.

Their close links with Iran have inevitably affected the international political outlook of the Pakistani Shi'a. In an interview in the late 1980s, Allama Arif Hussain al-Hussaini, the leader of the main Shiite movement Tehrik-i-Nifaz-i-Fiqh-i-Jafria (Movement for the Implementation of Shiite Religious Law), expressed a number of hostile and xenophobic views toward the West in particular, reflecting basically a Khomeini line:

The cause of the misfortune of [all Islamic countries] is imperialism, particularly in relation to the activities of the United States of America. . . . Where Muslims are made to fight in the name of nationalities you will find that the USSR is behind it, and where people are divided in the name of factionalism you will find that America is behind it.<sup>2</sup>

Hussaini also expressed total contempt for what he saw as the duplicity of the Zia regime:

<sup>1</sup>Ahmed, 1987, p. 85.

<sup>2</sup>Lodhi, 1988, p. 810; p. 813.

Our movement's stand was that General Zia was not sincere about Islam, and that he was exploiting Islam to prolong his rule. The referendum [as to whether the people wanted a policy of Islamization] was a complete fraud. . . . If we want the introduction of an Islamic system in Pakistan then we have two options: the electoral way or by means of a revolution.<sup>3</sup>

The revolutionary path is not realistic for the attainment of national-level Pakistani policies, and Shiite revolutionary activity could lead to considerable disruption of Pakistan and the imposition of tighter controls over the Shiite community. Sunni Islamists will almost surely never make common cause with the Shi'a radicals since they see each other as rivals and not allies. This fact will severely limit the impact the Shi'a community will have on Pakistani national policies in the future, and on Islamist politics in particular.

In the past, Iran has sought to influence those policies, even through the direct intervention of Iranian officials. The Iranian consul general in Karachi, for example, was openly involved in supporting Shi'a demonstrations in the mid-1980s. Because of the revolutionary character of much of Khomeini's message, some Shi'a were reluctant to get too close to Iranian-supported activities.<sup>4</sup>

Recognizing their distinct minority status in Pakistan, the Shi'a Islamists seem to understand that their future is sharply dependent upon tolerance from the Sunni majority. As Hussaini has stated, "One of the objectives of our movement is to strive for an Islam that is above sectarianism. We recognize the other schools of thought and expect the same from them."<sup>5</sup>

In the final analysis, the Shi'a are not likely to be able to exert a major influence upon the course of fundamentalism in the country. The greater the degree of Sunni fundamentalism, the more the Shi'a will be under pressure and fearful for their own religious entity in a Sunni Islamic state. Demanding greater rights for themselves or seeking Iranian intervention on their behalf will only lead to negative reaction from the Sunni community. It would seem that the Shi'a's best course of action would be to support a more secular form of government, which will relieve Sunni pressure upon them.

Very little is known about the relationship between Afghan and Pakistani Shi'a, although many Afghan Shi'a, the Hazaras in particular, have settled in Pakistan's border areas, especially after the Soviet invasion. The position and attitudes of the Pakistani Shi'a may have

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 809-810.

<sup>4</sup>Ahmed, 1987, p. 285.

<sup>5</sup>Allama Arif Hussain al-Hussaini, as quoted in Lodhi, 1988, p. 807.

been affected by increased contact with the Afghan Shi'a during the anti-Soviet fighting there, since large numbers of Shiite Hazaras took refuge in Pakistan. There is little information regarding the nature of these contacts. Since the Hazaras' independence and political clout in Afghanistan were greatly strengthened in the course of the Afghan struggle, it is possible they have an emboldening effect upon the Shi'a of Pakistan.

Iran's influence, in turn, will largely be limited to—almost hostage to—the Shi'a community. Iran will not be able to exert major influence upon Pakistani domestic politics, except as a potentially disruptive force through the Shi'a. In a time of turmoil in Pakistan, externally supported Shi'a activism and violence could contribute significantly to the breakdown of order and would almost surely spark army intervention.

Iranian support to Sunni fundamentalists is even less likely. It is possible, however, that in the event of a confrontation between secular and religious forces in Pakistan, Sunni religious parties would be willing to turn to Iran for support. Iran's policies on such an issue would depend on the specific trade-offs involved between alienating the Pakistani government and potential gains of the religious parties. In a period when Iran has suffered from some isolation in the world, its ties with Pakistan through the Economic Cooperation Organization will not be readily dispensed with. But Iranian policies have been too mercurial in the past to utterly dismiss this possibility. Any Iranian support for Sunni religious parties in Pakistan, however, would also have to compete with Saudi support to the same Sunni elements—not a likely scenario.

#### **IRANIAN INFLUENCE ON PAKISTANI FOREIGN POLICY**

Iran's limited abilities to affect Pakistani domestic politics, however, do not necessarily carry over into foreign policy. Pakistan has never viewed Iran as a rival, and relations between the countries have always been quite cordial. The Shah was a supporter of Pakistan throughout. Khomeini had ideological problems with Zia's strategic ties to the West and the United States but in the end did not allow these ties to undermine basic Iranian-Pakistani relations. Iran of course needed Pakistani support during the Gulf War and strongly backed Pakistan's support of the anti-Soviet mujahidin. Whatever support some elements of the Iranian government have periodically rendered to Pakistani Shi'a,

it did not constitute the main thrust of Tehran's policies toward Islamabad.<sup>6</sup>

Iran and Pakistan have maintained relatively close positions on Afghan policy. Both have supported the mujahidin, although Iran more circumspectly. Both states have so far (surprisingly) refrained from recognizing the mujahidin government in exile—due both to its political ineffectiveness and, much more importantly for Iran, to its exclusion of Shiite parties from the interim government. Pakistan has shown unwillingness to alienate Iran and maintained considerable caution in balancing between the two sides of the Gulf War.

Tehran will thus be in a position to exert some influence over Pakistan's foreign policy under almost any Pakistani government. Iran will be intent on limiting Western influence in Pakistan, although as we noted earlier, Pakistan will realistically not delegate to anyone else the responsibility for assessing its own needs for Western security assistance. In an era when the USSR may no longer present the same kind of threat to Pakistan as it did in earlier decades, Pakistan may command less ability to seek major Western military assistance. Indeed, Western security assistance may be less forthcoming if Pakistan's needs are primarily seen as defense against regional threats such as that from India. Iran's influence will to that extent grow marginally stronger as Pakistan leans more on its own resources for security arrangements.

Iran can seek Pakistan's Muslim solidarity on other broad Islamic regional issues, particularly on "have" versus "have-not" issues and on matters affecting Western imperialism. While far from fundamentalist in outlook, Pakistan under the PPP will be inclined toward a populist, "Third World" outlook that reflects much of the views of the Pakistani elite and intelligentsia; the strong left wing of the PPP historically has maintained strong rhetorical "anti-imperialist" positions. But the PPP is still not likely to become highly ideological in terms of actual anti-Western action unless there are serious conflicts with the United States. U.S. assistance is quite important to Pakistan at this juncture when (1) the Afghan situation is far from resolved, (2) Soviet-Pakistani relations still suffer the strain of Pakistan's unreduced support for the

<sup>6</sup>It is interesting that the Ayatollah's violent response in early 1989 to Salman Rushdie's book, *The Satanic Verses*, came only after Pakistani Islamists had stirred up demonstrations against the American cultural center in Islamabad. The Rushdie book had been reviewed, very negatively, in Tehran the previous fall, but had not evinced further Iranian reaction. In this case, it was Pakistani Islamists who had the radicalizing impact upon the Iranian reaction. The Ayatollah obviously seized on the publicity opportunities from the Pakistani demonstrations to meet his own ideological needs and domestic political requirements, at a time when he felt that Iranian moderate forces were excessively diluting Iranian revolutionary zeal.

mujahidin to bring down the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) regime in Kabul, and (3) India remains a potential nuclear threat.

In the future, however, this position of close cooperation with the United States could change. If the mujahidin remain unsuccessful in their struggle against the PDPA regime and resistant to any kind of political deal with Kabul, Pakistan will be tempted to stop military support to the mujahidin. If a political settlement to the Afghan situation should come about, U.S.-Pakistani mutuality of interests will lose the intensity it had during the Afghan struggle. U.S.-Pakistani ties could then undergo greater strain, primarily on nuclear proliferation issues; Pakistani politics may well produce some kind of anti-American sentiment as politically useful to opposition parties. Benazir Bhutto in any case will need to keep her "Islamic flank" protected and to adopt "Islamic" positions on international issues wherever it can be readily done. Her successors must do the same. Solidarity on major Islamic issues is important for Pakistan's Arab ties as well. No Pakistani prime minister will undermine Pakistan's contacts with the West simply for the sake of Islamic politicking, however. Nor will any Pakistani regime damage its important economic and military ties with the Gulf Arab states simply for the sake of pleasing Iran.

If Iran feels that Pakistan is too attentive to the Gulf Arab states, especially to Saudi Arabia, Iran could react negatively against Benazir Bhutto. Iranian support for Pakistani Islamist parties, especially the Jama'at, could strengthen the Jama'at in a struggle against Bhutto. The more traditional Islamic parties such as the JUI and the JUP will be less sympathetic to Iran as a Shiite power and probably less susceptible to Iranian blandishments.

## **INDIAN IMPACT ON PAKISTANI FOREIGN POLICY**

India has impact on the course of Pakistani Islam and Pakistan's foreign policy in three senses: (1) India is the chief strategic antagonist to Pakistan, (2) it contains a massive Muslim population itself, and (3) it is engaged in a long struggle with Pakistan over Kashmir—a struggle invariably characterized in religious terms.

Because Pakistan was created as a state for Indian Muslims from large chunks of territory out of traditional India, Pakistan's very existence is a sensitive point to India. Pakistanis themselves are defensive toward India about Pakistan's creation and are convinced that India in no way wishes the Pakistani state well. Three (losing) wars with India have reinforced this point to Pakistanis. Islamabad's

foreign policy thus rotates primarily around the issue of defense and security vis-à-vis India. Because it is almost exclusively religion that distinguishes Pakistan from India, Pakistan is constantly driven to reinforce its Islamic character, in particular through ties with the rest of the Muslim world. This in part explains Pakistan's reluctance to break with Iran, even during times of stress over Tehran's radical policies. Pakistan does not need enemies in the Muslim world.

India's huge Muslim community, over one-third of its population, numbers more than the population of Pakistan itself. These Muslims could not or would not emigrate to Pakistan during partition in 1947. Their position in Indian society is ambiguous, and they maintain the strong character of a minority even today. They view Pakistan with ambivalence, for it is Pakistan's existence that tends to shed some doubt on the ultimate loyalties of the Indian Muslim; bad Indo-Pakistani relations redound directly to the disadvantage of Indian Muslims. The Muslim problem in India hence creates a further inherent tension between the two countries.

The Kashmir problem, which led to the Indo-Pakistani wars of 1949 and 1965, is the clearest expression of this tension. Yet another war between India and Pakistan is again a distinct possibility as tensions have risen in Kashmir following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. The tension is perhaps greater at this time because of the increasingly "fundamentalist" character of the Islamic resistance in Kashmir, a predominantly Muslim state under Delhi's rule. A Kashmir Liberation Front has been conducting operations against Indian authorities since the mid-1980s and undertaking armed insurgence and terrorist operations. While still small in numbers, the Front has garnered broad support among the Kashmiri population. Its activists style themselves "mujahidin"—a term that has taken on greater resonance for Pakistanis after the struggle against the Russians in Afghanistan.<sup>7</sup>

India claims to have evidence of continuing massive Pakistani support for the Kashmiri unrest, especially from 1984 on, including Pakistani training of "hundreds of guerrillas" and a stockpile of U.S.-provided weapons. The Indians also claim that among the militants captured are Afghans from Gulbuddin Hikmetyar's Hizb-e-Islami (Islamic Party), trained by the Pakistani intelligence service.<sup>8</sup> If accurate, this report suggests evidence of closer workings among the Islamists of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Kashmir.

Given the circumstances in Kashmir, it is unlikely that the issue will ever be resolved unless India were to grant a major degree of autonomy

<sup>7</sup>See Fineman, 1990.

<sup>8</sup>See Harrison, 1990.

to Kashmir, rather than linking it, as it is today, with the primarily Hindu state of Jammu. Until such a settlement, the issue is explosive and will remain a key target of Pakistani Islamists—perhaps long into the future.

### SAUDI ARABIAN INFLUENCE

Saudi Arabia plays a significant role in Pakistani politics and, as noted above, has been a strong and consistent supporter and founder of the Jama'at Party. The Saudis also support the Ahl-i-Hadith Party, which has its roots in Wahhabi (Saudi fundamentalist) ideology but has been more active in the social rather than political realm.<sup>9</sup> But Saudi Arabia's national and ideological interests extend well beyond any commitment to the Jama'at. In ideological terms, Pakistan is a premier Muslim country in the world—stemming from its creation on the basis of Islam. For Riyadh it is an important military connection: As of 1987 Pakistan maintained some 50,000 military personnel serving in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf,<sup>10</sup> contributing directly to the internal and foreign security of the Kingdom.<sup>11</sup> Pakistan is also very active in the Saudi-dominated Organization of the Islamic Conference. Lastly, Riyadh perceives Pakistan as a key vehicle for frontline support of Islam in South Asia and as a counterweight to the role of Iran in the region.

Saudi ties with Pakistan will remain important and will not be limited to Islamic politics. While Saudi Arabia will encourage fundamentalist Islam in Pakistan, and will probably continue to support the Jama'at, Riyadh will not wish to jeopardize the strategic stability of Pakistan in the name of any Islamic ideology or any single Pakistani party.

### AFGHAN INFLUENCE

Afghanistan's influence could be quite negative upon Pakistani policies, depending upon what elements are in power in each country. The interrelationships of many of the mujahidin parties and Pakistani politics are discussed in a forthcoming RAND study on Islamic fundamentalism in Afghanistan.

<sup>9</sup>See Jones, 1988, pp. 69-70.

<sup>10</sup>See Ahmed Rashid, 1987, p. 36.

<sup>11</sup>Pakistan's military presence in Saudi Arabia consists of an entire infantry unit of one division, two armored brigades, and two artillery brigades, as well as naval and air force personnel. Saudi Arabia has financed Pakistan's purchase of U.S. fighter aircraft to the tune of \$800,000 in 1981. See Jamal Rashid, 1986, pp. 30-32.

The most negative scenario emerges if fundamentalist mujahidin parties, especially Hikmetyar's Hizb-e-Islami, were ever to come to power in Afghanistan. Hikmetyar has enjoyed long ties with Pakistan's religious elements, especially the Jama'at, for nearly two decades. Should tensions grow between any secular ruling party in Pakistan such as the PPP and the religious parties in Pakistan, it is quite possible that a fundamentalist-oriented Afghan government might provide covert aid to the Jama'at to support a confrontation against such a party. Not only could the Afghans provide money, but also arms and the guerrilla know-how to train and support guerrilla movements. This scenario presents a particularly volatile situation that could end up severely destabilizing Pakistan. Under such circumstances, Pakistan's army could probably be counted on to take power and keep order because the Pakistan army is more than a match for the Afghan army.

A second scenario involves a fundamentalist Kabul combined with a strong fundamentalist Pakistan. This scenario seems somewhat unlikely given the problems that the fundamentalists will face in both countries in coming to power, particularly in Pakistan. Fundamentalists will very nearly require the full support of the Pakistan army to take power in Pakistan; under General Zia's highly tolerant approach to the Jama'at and other religious groups, the fundamentalists enjoyed as much military support as they are ever likely to get but never came close to seizing power. Nonetheless, considerable cooperation between two like-minded fundamentalist governments in Kabul and Islamabad could have major regional impact if Pakistani fundamentalists ever came to power; see below for details on the policies such a government would pursue.

Should a Pashtun nationalist leadership emerge in Afghanistan, the danger becomes somewhat different. This is precisely the kind of Afghan government Pakistan wants least to see, for in the past such Afghan leadership has supported breakaway movements (the so-called Pashtunistan movement) among the Pashtuns in Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province. Because of the left-wing/communist associations now attributed to the Pashtunistan movement, it has become quite discredited both in Afghanistan and among most Pashtuns in Pakistan. Most of Pakistan would be united against such Afghan government policies, and Pakistan here, too, holds the upper hand with its control of Afghan's economic jugular vein of the Khyber Pass. A fundamentalist government in Pakistan would undoubtedly turn to destabilizing tactics in Afghanistan as they did earlier under Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, utilizing Islamist forces inside Afghanistan to stir up trouble. Under a situation of severe internal instability in Pakistan, however, a

resuscitated Pashtunistan movement supported by Kabul could create major additional problems for a beleaguered central government in Islamabad.

## VI. THE FUTURE OF THE PAKISTAN PEOPLE'S PARTY

The future of the PPP—the single greatest mass party in Pakistan—will have decisive influence on the long-range political prospects of the Islamist parties. The Islamists and the fundamentalists are unlikely to gain power on their own. The PPP represents the single greatest alternative to Islamist political power. But the PPP and the democratic process suffered a setback in August 1990 when President Ghulam Ishaq Khan, through the use of extraordinary powers of the presidency, dismissed Benazir Bhutto from office and dissolved Parliament.

The political environment in Pakistan had markedly improved in 1988 in Bhutto's victory in the first genuinely free and open elections in Pakistan since 1970.<sup>1</sup> In the 1970 elections, for example, the religious parties had done poorly, gaining some 18 seats out of 300. The PPP, under Benazir's father, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, and bearing a distinctive radical populist character, came in second in the elections, and in the following year came to power after the disastrous war with India and the breakaway of Bangladesh in 1971. But disillusionment with the elder Bhutto's regime grew progressively during the 1970s as the economy deteriorated; he began to lose more and more of his constituency and reverted increasingly to force to remain in power.<sup>2</sup> It was in response to this authoritarian trend that an anti-PPP coalition grew, including the religious and conservative parties (which were divided in the 1970 elections) that challenged Bhutto in the 1977 elections. This opposition itself took on populist overtones by attracting most of the middle and lower-middle classes, as well as professional groups. It was in effect a "petty-bourgeois-religious alliance."<sup>3</sup>

The religious parties did well under Zia. Zia came to power by coup and maintained his strength primarily through nonrepresentative means rather than elections; in this environment, the religious parties did not really strive to test their strength at the polls. They enjoyed Zia's support and in the main supported his policies on Islamization and Afghanistan. But they became identified with a nondemocratic

<sup>1</sup>"The 1970 elections were the first general elections held in Pakistan on the basis of universal adult franchise." See Jahan, 1972, p. 188.

<sup>2</sup>Sayeed, 1980, p. 110.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 157-163.

process that greatly weakened their position. As a result, the PPP once again profited from the growth of national discontent and from a desire for democracy, as well as from specific discontent with economic conditions as they emerged under Zia. In effect, while Islam can be a potent rallying force against the status quo, mere invocation of Islam will not suffice to maintain religious parties in power. As a device for maintaining power, the invocation of Islam is seen explicitly for what it is: an election ploy and not a referendum on Islam itself. Indeed, as we noted earlier, the excessive use of Islam in politicking can quickly create cynicism about "Islamic policies."

The PPP, once again in power under Benazir in 1988, faced the firm opposition of the religious parties, as well as other nonreligious parties. Some of the fundamentalists fulminated about the "inadmissibility in Islam" of a female prime minister. The Salman Rushdie affair was exploited by the Jama'at to weaken Benazir Bhutto. In her early attempts to improve ties with India, she was castigated for weakness in the face of the Hindu enemy and the growing Kashmir crisis. And coalition politics in the individual states also weakened the PPP's ability to govern the country. Charges of widespread government corruption and an incompetent cabinet led to further opposition against her.

Benazir's efforts to undo some of the rigidities and nondemocratic features of Zia-era legislation and regulations prompted the fundamentalists to clash increasingly with the PPP. But any success of the fundamentalists depends on forces greater than themselves. If free elections are again held in October 1990 as promised, Bhutto has a chance to win again at the polls—if the army will let her take power again. While the army can block the PPP's road to power, in any free governmental system it will be the other parties and regional politicians who in the end rival PPP power. They will certainly need the help of the fundamentalist parties, but the fundamentalists cannot do it themselves through normal political processes. What the Islamists and religious parties can do is exploit domestic problems to the point of instigating rioting and disorders that will periodically compel the army to take power again. Some in the fundamentalist parties might feel they had a better chance to exert influence under a military regime like Zia's than they do through an openly functioning democracy.

In the end, however, the military may eventually be more confident of the ability of a true countrywide party like the PPP to manage the country than of a rag-tag opposition coalition that shares little in common except for an anti-Bhutto stance and that could lead the country

into an even greater state of chaos.<sup>4</sup> After the negative and corrupting experiences of army rule in the past, recognized by the army itself, there is little enthusiasm for the army to intervene in the absence of severe chaos or a major security threat to the nation. The future of the PPP, then, will decisively influence the role the Islamist parties will be accorded in the future political process of the country.

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<sup>4</sup>See Tefft, 1989c.

## **VII. HOW LIKELY ARE FUNDAMENTALIST PARTIES TO COME TO POWER?**

The weaknesses and problems of the Islamist parties, as discussed in Sec. III, will make it difficult for them to come to power:

- They are extremely unlikely to be elected since they have never enjoyed much more than 10 percent of the national vote. To command greater electoral strength, these parties would have to move in the direction of mass politics, and most alternative parties would have to collapse as well to give them a clear field.
- While the military is sympathetic to Islam, it is extremely unlikely to allow the Islamists to come to power and exert control over the military.
- It is conceivable that Islamist influence could grow within the military to the extent that a senior Islamist officer could attempt to seize power. However, General Zia was a senior military figure with great sympathies for the Islamists who nonetheless kept them from influencing critical decisions for the country. It is hard to imagine a single figure emerging at the top whose views would be much more Islamist than those of Zia; any true zealot would not rise that far in the ranks of what is still a primarily Western-oriented and -organized institution.
- Serious deterioration of the economic, political, and social fabric of Pakistan could create receptivity for a radical Islamic solution. This would be particularly true if Pakistan's relations with the West were to unravel, or if Pakistan were sharply rebuffed by the United States because of nuclear policy. A serious military defeat by India could also possibly cause a massive turning to Islam for solace and moral redirection, and as a cultural vehicle for anger toward the West. This scenario would seem the most likely one of all to imbue Islamist policies with a highly xenophobic character.
- As noted above, the Islamists may believe that they have more to gain through working with a military regime such as Zia's than through an open democratic process; on the other hand, even before Zia's death, most of the Islamists were seeking to distance themselves somewhat from Zia and were interested in pursuing the opportunities that a relaxation of martial law could bring.

In the absence of the various scenarios described above, Islamist parties in Pakistan will remain a significant intellectual force in the country indefinitely but are likely at best to share power with other parties and to exert their influence through such coalitions. The existence of Islamist parties—and Pakistan's Islamic heritage from conception—will likely hinder any broader move toward the kind of secularism so prominent in Turkey and many radical Arab states today.

In its regional policies, a Pakistan controlled by an Islamist government would be much more militant on Islamic issues, with special emphasis on Afghanistan, Central Asia, Chinese Muslims, Kashmir, and Indian Muslims.

We have examined the complex interrelationships between the Pakistani and Afghan fundamentalist parties. Islamists in Islamabad would strongly support Afghan Islamists to help them gain greater influence in Kabul, or even to gain power.

Pakistani Islamists will have continuing interest in the policies and independence of Soviet Muslims in Central Asia; here again, Afghanistan represents one of the key links to Central Asia for Pakistan. Islamists will also have growing sympathy for Chinese Muslims in Xinjiang Province. These Muslims, mostly Turkic in the Western part of China, are increasingly restive—in part stimulated by the greater independence for Soviet Turkic Muslims over the border—and China has moved to repress them.

Pakistani Islamists will feel ambivalence on this issue since China has long been a key military ally of Pakistan, and a needed one to help offset Indian power. At the same time, Pakistani Islamists cannot condone repression of Chinese Muslims. *Raison d'état* is likely to prevail in Islamabad's overall policies toward China in view of China's strategic importance to Islamabad; but over time the Chinese Muslim issue is likely to grow in salience, rather than diminish.

Pakistani interest in Kashmir and Indian Muslims was discussed earlier. Islamists in Islamabad will probably contribute to a high degree of tension with New Delhi, given the sensitivity of Delhi to the Muslim issue. India, of course, will look with sympathy upon the policies of Moscow and Beijing if it comes to restricting the independence and religious activism of their Muslim populations.

## VIII. WHAT WOULD A FUNDAMENTALIST ISLAMIC PAKISTAN BE LIKE?

Because Pakistan has already become an "Islamic Republic" both in name and inspiration, it is difficult to gauge "what else might happen" if it were to become more Islamic. To a considerable extent, the issue of whether a state is or is not a "legitimate" or "genuine" Islamic state is really a political and ideological judgment, not a religious one. For example, while most Muslims would tend to view Saudi Arabia as unmistakably an Islamic state in which religious principles dominate, Iran under the Ayatollah fundamentally challenged Saudi Islamic legitimacy. Iran's statement is, of course, more a political broadside than a religious assessment, emerging from Iran's geopolitical rivalry with the Saudis and their intense desire to destroy Saudi Arabia's security ties with the United States.

The Ayatollah could well have made the same charge about Pakistan, but for geopolitical reasons had chosen not to do so. Thus, an assessment of "how Islamic" Pakistan could become is, for the West, mainly a question of how radical or anti-Western could Pakistan become. Its potential radicalism rests less on the precise degree to which Islamic law is implemented than it does on the degree to which a militant anti-Western vision becomes dominant among the clergy and Islamist politicians. Pakistan's anti-Westernism depends not only on philosophical conviction, but on their entire vision of the role the West currently plays in Pakistan. In short, Islam, as any other ideology, can be radicalized or moderated depending on the political ambitions, motivations, and outlook of the actor.

Purely in terms of applying Islamic law, Pakistan could go yet further, despite the major impact of Zia's Islamization program. Zia pointedly exempted several key areas of his program from the review of the Shari'a court: the constitution and martial law ordinances, family law, and fiscal law.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, a future Pakistani government could enact the Shari'a Bill in full, which would lead to abolishing all laws that do not spring from Islamic law or that are inconsistent with it. Such a step would be a profound blow to Pakistan's legal structure and would cast immense confusion in governmental procedure until sorted out carefully in a new wave of Islamic legislation. No other Islamic

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<sup>1</sup>Esposito, 1986, p. 349.

country, including Iran and Saudi Arabia, has seen fit to dismantle all law stemming from non-Islamic origins.<sup>2</sup>

The major area of debate over Zia's program was whether it went too far—in the eyes of the Westernized elite and women—or whether it did not go far enough—in the view of the 'ulama and the Islamists. Islamists criticized the program for dealing with details rather than the spirit of what a true Islamic vision of the state should be. While the laws may reflect traditional Islamic jurisprudence, the Islamists in particular had a broader vision. In the economic area, for example, although specific types of traditional Muslim taxation were restored, the Islamists did not feel that the spirit of true Islamic social justice was met. In their view

a return to Islamic law [would] provide the blueprint for a truly democratic, egalitarian society based upon Islamic social justice. The introduction of an Islamic system of government would avoid the extremes of corporate capitalism and state socialism, substitute Islamic values for their excessive materialism and secularism, support small industry and business interests, counter the corruption and spiritual malaise of the Bhutto years, and thus realize for the first time Pakistan's destiny as an Islamic state and society.<sup>3</sup>

These ideals, however, lack concrete form, and the problem of implementation remains. Given the relatively conservative social agenda of the Islamist parties, it is unlikely that these parties will in fact be the vehicle for radicalism in the near future. Significant segments of society such as the lower bureaucracy, most of the armed forces, businessmen, landowners, and bazaari merchants have all felt basically comfortable with the Islamization program to date. Insistence on tighter conformity with the Shari'a in terms of punishment, segregation of women, Islamic taxes, and other areas would represent a move toward a more conservative polity, not a radical one. And as noted above, Pakistan has never allowed security policy to be compromised by domestic ideological considerations.

Thus, Pakistan in principle could become more Islamic or more fundamentalist in character. This does not automatically require that it

<sup>2</sup>Saudi Arabia, for example, states that its constitution is the Quran, and its source of legislation, the Shari'a. But the Shari'a has never been codified because this would impose a man-made order upon Holy Law. "Yet, in practice, Saudi kings have utilized custom and tradition as a means of broadening the scope of the Shari'a in the light of the requirements of a rapidly modernizing state." The Saudis have thus employed *ijtihad*, or innovation through interpretation, in a fashion not normally tolerable within orthodox Sunni Islam. It has also employed a system of courts (*Mazalim courts*) apart from the Shari'a courts, which "were similar to secular courts of law in the continental European pattern." See MacIntyre, 1981, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup>Esposito, 1986, p. 342.

become much more authoritarian, but the chances are good that this would take place in an authoritarian environment. The maintenance of democratic procedures will probably otherwise stymie the imposition of draconian fundamentalist policies. The question for U.S. policymakers, then, really involves the implications of increased Islamic policies for Pakistan's foreign policy and relations with the West.

## IX. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE UNITED STATES

### U.S. INTERESTS

The key U.S. interests in Pakistan have been to preserve the integrity of the country, maintain democratic practices, preserve its role as a U.S. ally and supporter of U.S. strategic goals in the region, and ensure that Pakistan is not destabilized or turned into an anti-Western state through subversion or invasion.

The 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan rendered the Soviet threat to Pakistan more vivid than anyone could have foreseen. Given Pakistan's firm support for the anti-Soviet mujahidin, the country was virtually in a state of war with Afghanistan, and indirectly, with the Soviet Union. Apart from any considerations of his own personal power, Zia's use of Islam as a rallying cry in fighting the communist regime in Kabul was highly effective. With Islamabad on the firing line, the U.S. was willing to release any potential pressure against Zia on questions of democracy, human rights, and nuclear proliferation.

With the departure of Soviet forces and the likely neutralization or collapse of the communist regime in Kabul, Pakistan's security situation has improved greatly. Direct conventional military conflict between Kabul and Islamabad is unlikely, and Pakistan is far more powerful. It is not in Kabul's interest to engage in direct conflict with Pakistan. The USSR is extremely unlikely to intervene again in Afghanistan or against Pakistan.

Gorbachev's "new thinking" in foreign policy has had two further effects: (1) It has led to improved Soviet ties with Islamabad (although tensions still exist as long as the PDPA remains under mujahidin assault with strong Pakistani backing), and (2) it has brought about a general improvement in the world atmosphere leading—gingerly—to an initial normalization of ties between India and Pakistan. (Some of this normalization was attributable to the accession of Benazir Bhutto to power in late 1988. These relations subsequently deteriorated again over Kashmir.) Russia will nonetheless always remain a geopolitical fact of life for Pakistan, as will the reality of cordial Soviet-Indian ties; India is still the "Crown Jewel" in the diadem of Soviet ties with the Third World.

Almost any Pakistani prime minister—and unquestionably the army—will certainly want to maintain U.S. security assistance, primarily with India in mind. The Islamist parties, however, will prefer to see a cooling of Pakistani relations with the United States, to enable

Pakistan to move into a more neutral posture in the Third World. They will likely insist on limiting U.S. diplomatic, cultural, and military presence in Pakistan. U.S. military access in Pakistan will be strictly limited or eliminated, and Pakistan will not participate in maneuvers with the United States in the Indian Ocean or the Gulf. Pakistan will cut off intelligence cooperation with the United States, except perhaps as relates to the USSR. A fundamentalist Pakistan will oppose the U.S. position in most Third World affairs and vote with other radical states in the UN on Third World issues. (See Sec. V for further discussion of a fundamentalist Pakistan's likely policies vis-à-vis the United States and international issues.)

The Islamists' objections to the United States will remain as follows:

- Intimate U.S. ties with Israel are a concern, but as U.S. policy moves toward greater balance on Arab-Israeli affairs, this disadvantage will diminish.
- Islamists see the "permissiveness" of American culture and society, its strong secularism, individualism, consumerism, and perceived "lack of moral values," as a major threat to Islamic culture.
- There is concern that importation of American culture into Pakistan through films and TV shows, and even the social behavior of large numbers of U.S. citizens living in Pakistan, will have an adverse effect.
- Few Pakistanis have any confidence in the durability of the U.S. security commitment to Pakistan in the context of the Indian threat: The United States has twice remained pointedly neutral in Pakistan's wars with India. A nuclear weapon is perceived by virtually all Pakistanis as a national obligation; U.S. efforts to block it—or penalize Pakistan for it—will be strongly resented. Islamists will join ranks fully with nationalists on this issue.
- Should Islamist parties come to power in the future and dispense with democratic procedures or engage in human rights violations, U.S. criticism, and possible financial pressure, will be deeply resented and condemned.
- Strong popular disaffection with U.S. policies could lead to mob action against U.S. interests, installations, and personnel such as took place in earlier Pakistani governments, and notably in 1979 when the U.S. Embassy was overrun, burned, and several U.S. citizens killed. The U.S. was also the target in 1989 when religious elements organized an attack on a U.S. cultural center because of U.S. publication of Salman Rushdie's anti-Islamic novel.

- Under social and economic hardship, Pakistani crowds are particularly susceptible to religiously inspired demagoguery, which can easily be turned against the United States. Islamist institutions in Pakistan maintain a strong anti-American cultural bias that surfaces easily, especially when the United States can be portrayed as leader of the "haves" versus the "have-nots," "corrupted," "allied with Israel" against the Arabs, and anti-Islamic. Deep reservoirs of ambivalence if not hostility toward the United States exist in educated and intellectual circles on both the left and the right (there is not a large moderate center). Their susceptibility to dependency theory and other Marxist interpretations that pit the United States against Third World interests is a semi-permanent fact of life in Pakistani politics.<sup>1</sup> Even with a left-of-center populist Benazir Bhutto government in power, the United States was still the convenient butt of popular wrath by the 'ulama in the anti-Rushdie riots even though the book had been published first in the UK.
- As long as the radical 'ulama and Islamists perceive a potential gain in domestic political strength by attacking the United States on a popular issue, they will do so.

The United States must expect, then, that it can become the butt of demagogic leaders in Pakistan at any time, particularly when beleaguered politicians seek to invoke the "hidden foreign hand" as the source of Pakistan's ills. Indian politics have long indulged in the same tactics, especially under Indira Gandhi. Islamist leaders in power who feel threatened will be at least as likely to use the same techniques and to reap a ready public response. Even though the United States is widely admired in Pakistan for its democratic principles, technology, concern for human rights, and living standards, these values can be easily impugned if Pakistani domestic frustrations—with any slight U.S. connection—get out of hand and are exploited politically.

## U.S. POLICIES

Given the political culture of Pakistan, the United States will probably be best advised to tread cautiously in extending its own political, cultural, and military presence in Pakistan. As in most countries, it is not hard for the U.S. Embassy to discover broad reservoirs of support for U.S. policies and presence within the country. Such support is quite real, but stems from a variety of motives including genuine

<sup>1</sup>See, for example, Rubin, 1986.

admiration of the United States, similarity of policy goals, personal and political self-interest, and a desire to extract maximum benefit from U.S. largess. These interests should be viewed realistically, not cynically, in the context of foreign policy relations abroad.

The dilemma comes when close ties with parties, leaders, and social circles can blind the United States to its adversaries, or to the deterioration of the domestic political, economic, or social situation with which it will, in the end, be closely linked. The United States has experienced the problem of being linked with the failing policies of unpopular circles regularly in other countries; it is easy to warn against but much harder to perceive, particularly as political situations slowly shift over time.

Pakistani fundamentalists themselves will always maintain some ambivalence toward U.S. resources and power. The United States, after all, has helped Pakistan against enemies whom the fundamentalists also fear: communists in Afghanistan, the USSR, and India (even though U.S. arms are not meant for use against India). Pakistan's historical roots, experience in losing Bangladesh and three wars to India, and fear of internal separatism all tend to create fundamental feelings of insecurity as a state. Thus, even in power the fundamentalists are unlikely to wage an all-out vendetta against the United States in the way that Iran has done under the Islamic Republic. But the fundamentalists also constitute a basic reservoir of latent hostility to the United States that must be kept in mind as a limiting factor to U.S. influence in Pakistan for the indefinite future.

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